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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SANAA 002743

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA, NEA/ARP, NEA/EX, S/CT, CA. DS/DSS,
CENTCOM FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/18/2013

TAGS: [PTER PREL YM COUNTER TERRORISM](#)

SUBJECT: DETAINEE RELEASES AND CT COOPERATION: QIRBI CALLS
FOR DIALOGUE

REF: A. SANAA 2700

[B. SANAA 2701](#)

[C. SANAA 2454](#)

Classified By: CDA Alan G. Misenheimer for Reasons 1.5 (B and D)

1. (C) Summary: FM Qirbi called in Charge 11/18 to discuss Yemen,s 11/17 announcement of detainee releases and other subjects (septels). Charge voiced U.S. concern over the ROYG decision to disregard repeated U.S. requests for consultation prior to any releases. Qirbi called for dialogue, particularly with Interior Minister Alimi and PSO Chief Gamish, to address each side,s concerns over CT cooperation. Qirbi stated that 54 &repentant8 detainees were to be released, that official statements citing 92 were in error, and that none had yet been freed. Post is following up separately with the Interior Ministry and PSO to seek further information on those designated for release. End Summary.

2. (C) FM Abubaker al-Qirbi called in Charge 11/18/03 to discuss CT cooperation) including Yemen,s 11/17 announcement that 92 &repentant8 security detainees were to be freed) and other subjects (septels). Pol/Econ Deputy also joined.

Qirbi: Need to Increase Dialogue on CT Issues

3. (C) Qirbi began by acknowledging concerns about CT cooperation aired by both sides in recent U.S.-Yemeni meetings) including FBI Director Mueller,s meeting with President Saleh and follow-on meetings between AMB Hull and senior Yemeni officials. Chief among ROYG complaints was a perceived U.S. tendency to accept erroneous intel on Yemeni CT actions without taking time to check the story with Yemeni authorities. His proposed solution: "We have to initiate a process of dialogue on CT cooperation" to "get to the crux of the matter" and address "difficulties faced by both sides." He cited Minister of Interior Alimi and Political Security Organization (PSO) Chief Gamish as key figures with which the U.S. side must maintain ongoing dialogue.

Case in Point: Detainee Releases

4. (C) Charge agreed that CT cooperation needed to be put right, as there is no more important aspect of the current bilateral relationship. He pointed out that Yemen,s 11/17 announcement that 92 &repentant" security detainees were slated for release had raised serious U.S. concerns due to the lack of advance consultation by the ROYG. Repeated U.S. requests for such consultation during the Mueller visit and in Ambassador,s subsequent meetings with Alimi and Gamish had not been taken into account, he said. Charge underscored the need for Yemen to address U.S. concerns by sharing names and information on those slated for release.

5. (C) Qirbi reviewed recent U.S.-ROYG CT exchanges, and appeared surprised that just the sort of dialogue he was now recommending had occurred, but had not prevented a serious disconnect on the release of detainees issue. Qirbi noted that 54 persons were to be released, and that official statements referring to 92 were incorrect. He said none had yet been freed.

6. (C) Returning to his dialogue theme, Qirbi observed that the points raised at a recent meeting between Yemen,s Ambassador in Washington and Deputy National Security Advisor for Combating Terrorism Townsend were a virtual "repeat" of the points Mueller raised with Saleh (ref a). He said the "stage is therefore set" for serious discussions and that "we cannot wait for incidents" to happen before increasing dialogue on CT matters.

Comment

7. (C) Comment: Qirbi,s citation of a new number) 54 vice 92) illustrates the obscurity surrounding virtually every

aspect of the detainee release issue. The Sanaa rumor mill is rife with conflicting accounts of numbers and criteria for release. While "no blood on the hands" is frequently heard as a key consideration, this could mean simply "no terrorist actions committed in/in Yemen." Some Arab diplomats are even convinced that the entire issue is a smokescreen to deter terrorism in Yemen and/or constrain restive tribes, and that no/no detainees will actually be released. Through the MOI and other channels, post will continue to seek clarification. Qirbi,s call notwithstanding, post believes that channels of dialogue are adequate and active, but we are not hearing enough from the Yemeni side.

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